

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 20158 01 OF 02 120956Z
ACTION DHA-02

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 PM-03 SP-02 L-01 H-01
NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 CA-01 VO-01
IO-06 EUR-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /052 W
-----056719 121749Z /15

P R 120640Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6047
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL CHIENG MAI 4183
AMCONSUL SONGKLA
AMCONSUL JDORN
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 20158

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--PARA ONE LINE TWO WORD NINE ADDED)

HONG KONG FOR INS DIDIR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF MY ID SN TH
SUBJECT: PROFILE OF INDOCHINESE BOAT CASE REFUGEES

1. SUMMARY: VISITS TO ELEVEN BOAT CASE REFUGEE LOCATIONS
IN FOUR SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES REVEAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FEARS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 20158 01 OF 02 120956Z

OF A THREAT TO INTERNAL SECURITY, AND RELIEF THAT THE U.S.
AND OTHER COUNTRIES ARE ABOUT TO LIGHTEN THE REFUGEE BURDEN.
THERE ARE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CHINESE AMONG "VIETNAMESE"
BOAT CASE REFUGEES. SHIPS AT SEA ARE CONTINUING TO IGNORE REFUGEES
IN DISTRESS. REFUGEES HAVE TAKEN HEART AT THE NEW AMERICAN,
AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND PROGRAMS, BUT THE U.S. REMAINS THE
PRIMARY CHOICE OF PERMANENT HAVEN. END SUMMARY.

2. VISITS BETWEEN LATE AUGUST AND EARLY SEPTEMBER TO TWO BOAT CASE LOCATIONS IN THAILAND, FOUR IN MALAYSIA, TWO IN SINGAPORE, AND THREE IN INDONESIA REVEALED THE FOLLOWING:

A. INTENSE LOCAL SUSPICIONS, EXCEPT FOR INDONESIA WHERE CAUTION IS THE MORE DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVE, THAT FIFTH COLUMNISTS ARE SECRETED AMONG THE REFUGEES, AND THAT THE REFUGEES REPRESENT A THREAT TO THE INTERNAL SECURITY OF THE HOST NATION. IN MALAYSIA THE FEAR IS THAT THEY ARE THERE TO MAP COASTLINES FOR A FUTURE VIETNAMESE INVASION.

B. A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE MERCHANTS AND CHINESE FISHERMEN AMONG THE "VIETNAMESE." THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE ALONG THE EAST COAST OF WEST MALAYSIA ESTIMATES THAT CHINESE MAKE UP 45 PERCENT OF THE OVER 2,000 BOAT CASE REFUGEES THERE. MOST OF THE CHINESE WE TALKED WITH HAD NO CONNECTION WITH THE U.S. DURING OUR LONG AND PAINFUL INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM. MANY SPEAK HALTING OR NO VIETNAMESE.

C. THE INFERENCE THAT A GOOD SHARE OF THE ESCAPEES ARE THE RICH AND THE CLEVER, WHO FREQUENTLY ESCAPE WITH, AND THANKS TO, A SEMI-LITERATE FISHING FAMILY. SOME BOATS HAVE ACTUALLY SAILED OUT TO SEA VIA THE SAIGON RIVER, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT SAIGON AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN SOMEHOW PERSUADED TO ACQUIESCE IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 20158 01 OF 02 120956Z

DEPARTURE. OUR FORMER EMPLOYEES AND THOSE VIETNAMESE WHO HAD A MEANINGFUL ASSOCIATION WITH THE PREVIOUS REGIME REPRESENT A DISAPPOINTING FRACTION OF THE ESCAPEES.

D. DISTRESS, AMONG SOME WHO SIGNED UP FOR OTHER COUNTRIES IN DESPAIR THAT THERE WOULD EVER BE ANOTHER AMERICAN PROGRAM, THAT THEIR OPTING FOR AUSTRALIA OR CANADA NOW DISQUALIFIES THEM FROM CONSIDERATION FOR THE UNITED STATES. FOR WHATEVER REASON - RELATIVES ALREADY THERE, OUR HIGH VISIBILITY IN VIETNAM FOR OVER A DECADE, WELFARE BOUNTY - THE U.S. IS THE CHOICE DESTINATION FOR ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF THE REFUGEES.

E. AN AVERSION FOR RESETTLEMENT IN FRANCE BECAUSE OF FEAR THAT IT WILL SOON HAVE A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT. THOSE WHO FLED THE NORTH IN 1954, AND THE SOUTH IN 1977, DONOT WANT A THIRD UPROOTING.

F. AN AWARENESS OF THE MUNIFICENT WELFARE BENEFITS OF STATES LIKE CALIFORNIA, AND A DESIRE TO SETTLE IN THEM TO ENJOY THESE PREREQUISITES "FOR A FEW MONTHS UNTIL I GET ESTABLISHED."

G. UNEVEN, BUT FREQUENTLY HUMANE AND SOMETIMES QUITE

SYMPATHETIC TREATMENT FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

H. GREATER FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OUTSIDE, AND MORE SPACE TO
BREATHE INSIDE THE CAMP, IN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA THAN IN THAILAND
OR SINGAPORE.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 20158 02 OF 02 130302Z
ACTION DHA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 EA-06 IO-06 ISO-00 SS-14 PM-03
SP-02 L-01 H-01 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
DODE-00 CA-01 VO-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /052 W
-----069313 130308Z /65

P R 120640Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6048
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
JAKARTA 7229
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL CHIENG MAI
AMCONSUL SONGKLA
AMCONSUL UDORN
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 20158
LIMDIS

I. THE IMPRESSION THAT SIZEABLE MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES
FROM ASIAN TEMPORARY HAVENS TO THE U.S. AND THIRD COUNTRIES
OVER THE COMING MONTHS WILL INCREASE THE CHANCES FOR LOCAL
HOSPITALITY TO FUTURE ARRIVALS. MALAYSIA AND THAILAND PLAINLY
FEEL SATURATED NOW.

J. THE INFORMATION THAT SHIPS AT SEA ARE IGNORING REFUGEES IN
DISTRESS. ONE GROUP OF 16 ADRIFT WITHOUT ENGINE POWER IN A
NINE METER LONG BOAT FOR 25 DAYS, AND WITHOUT FOOD FOR THE LAST
HALF OF THAT TIME, WATCHED 26 SHIPS PASS THEM BY BEFORE A KOREAN
VESSEL RESCUED THEM AUGUST 11.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 20158 02 OF 02 130302Z

K. THE FEELING THAT THE PAROLE PROGRAM, WITH ITS ATTENDANT INSPIRATION TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO MAKE SIMILAR OFFERS, IS A NOTEWORTHY HUMANITARIAN GESTURE TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE TAKEN MORTAL RISKS TO ESCAPE A SOCIETY THEY HAVE FOUND UNBEARABLE.

3. COMMENT: GIVEN HISTORICAL ENMITIES BETWEEN THAILAND AND VIETNAM, AND THE ALMOST VISCERAL REACTION OF DISLIKE WHEN MANY THAI ENCOUNTER A VIETNAMESE, THAILAND'S INTOLERANCE OF THE VIETNAMESE IS AT LEAST EXPLICABLE. MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA'S RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS HAS PRODUCED AN UNDERSTANDABLE DISTRUST OF THOSE WHO HAIL FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. IT IS DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CONVERGED AT LENGTH WITH THESE REFUGEES TO CONJURE UP A VISION OF SPIES AMONG THEM. DESPITE CROWDED AND FREQUENTLY MISERABLE CONDITIONS IN THE CAMPS, AND SOMETIMES PROLONGED STAY THERE IN ENFORCED IDLENESS WITH SCANT PROSPECTS FOR EMIGRATION, NO ONE IS CLAMORING TO GO DBFK HOME. THEY LEFT VIETNAM NOT ON ANY MYSTIC ESPIONAGE MISSION, BUT BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T STAND LIVING THERE.

4. PEOPLE IN DISTRESS NEED HELP REGARDLESS OF ETHNICITY, AND CHINESE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS HAVE MADE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN SOCIETY. MORE CHINESE COULD BE A HEALTHY DEMOGRAPHIC TONIC. WE SHOULD NOT HAVE THE ILLUSION, HOWEVER, THAT MUCH MORE THAN 65 PERCENT OF THE CURRENT BOAT CASE REFUGEES STRANDED IN ASIA ARE ETHNIC VIETNAMESE, NOR THAT MORE THAN A MINIMAL PERCENTAGE OF THE VIETNAMESE WORKED FOR US OR THEIR GOVERNMENT IN VIETNAM.

5. THE CURRENT PAROLE WAS A NECESSARY AND POSITIVE ACT THAT HAS GIVEN HEART TO THE REFUGEES THEMSELVES AND RELIEF TO FRIENDLY RYCUN GOVERNEMENTS. IN PLANNING HOW TO COPE WITH THE FUTURE EXODUS, WE SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT THE REFUGEES EXITING BY BOAT IN 1977 ARE OF CHANGING COMPOSITION FROM THOSE WHO LEFT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 20158 02 OF 02 130302Z

AT THE FALL OF SAIGON.
WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, SECURITY, BOAT CASES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO20158
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770330-0766
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770976/aaaaclpz.tel
Line Count: 218
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a21c8648-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION DHA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1313974
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROFILE OF INDOCHINESE BOAT CASE REFUGEES
TAGS: SREF, MY, ID, SN, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a21c8648-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009